



## **Most Reverend Robert W. Finn**

**Bishop**

**Diocese Kansas City ~ St. Joseph**

### **Campaign to Increase Missouri's Minimum Wage**

August 9, 2006

I am honored to be with you today and bring you words of support from Bishop Robert Finn of the Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph .

As bishop of some 140,000 Catholics in northern and western Missouri , and in the name of the one quarter-million Missourians who stand to benefit from an increase in the minimum wage, I wish to express my support for this ballot initiative. I do so as part of my ongoing concern about the dignity of low-income families struggling to break out of poverty and to sustain their families.

As people of faith, we believe that every working person should be able to provide the essentials of life -- food, clothing, shelter and health care – through a just wage. In Catholic teaching, the principle of a living wage is integral to our understanding of human work, dignity, and the family. Although the minimum wage is not a living wage, the Catholic bishops have supported increasing the minimum wage over the decades. The minimum wage needs to be raised to help restore its purchasing power, not just for the goods and services one can buy but for the self-esteem and self-worth it affords the worker.

As each voter approaches the ballot box in November, I urge you to consider three simple questions:

- Do the workers who do the hard, sweaty, unattractive jobs that we all need done, contribute to the common good and so deserve a wage that's a little closer to a living wage?
- Does simple justice require that we give the first raise in nine (9) years to the lady who cleans the office toilets and the man who stocks the store shelves?
- With Congress snarled in election-year politics over a minimum wage bill, what should Missouri voters do about this serious moral question?

Luke's Gospel tells us of Jesus' priorities. There the first Beatitude is, "Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours. Catholic teaching on the economy holds that "the fulfillment of the basic needs of the poor is of the highest priority." I trust that when all people of faith and all people of conscience learn the facts, they will see that raising the minimum wage is the right thing to do and now is the right time to do it.

**-- End --**

\*Statement delivered by Reverend Francis Schuele, Pastor, St. Cyril Parish, Sugar Creek, Missouri.

Appendix: Excerpts from Catholic Teaching Documents

Remuneration for work should guarantee humans the opportunity to provide a dignified livelihood for themselves and their family on the material, social, cultural and spiritual level, taking into account the role and the productivity of each, the state of the business, and the common good (Gaudium et Spes, #67). Agreement between the parties is not sufficient to justify morally the amount to be received in wages.

[Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #2434